

SubC
10 automatically displaying by the browser for the end user the retrieved
11 replacement related information for the first part.

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1 2. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the identifier of the
2 Sub
DI first part is a selected one of a UPC identifier, product-identifier mark, and textual
3 product identifier.

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1 3. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:
2 obtaining at least one user preference; and
3 arranging the retrieved replacement related information according to the at least
4 one user preference.

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1 4. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 3, wherein the user preference
2 is a selected one of limiting price, limiting distance to travel to obtain a replacement
3 part, limiting shipping time for the replacement part, limiting time to effect part
4 replacement, and only displaying a vendor having the replacement part in stock.

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1 5. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 4, further comprising:
2 categorizing the retrieved replacement related information into plural categories;
3 wherein such categories are sorted according to the at least one user preference.

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1 6. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 3, further comprising:
2 identifying at least one provider within the retrieved replacement related
3 information having a replacement part in stock; and
4 prominently displaying the at least one provider;

5 wherein prominently displaying includes sorting the retrieved replacement related
6 information so that the at least one provider is at the top of such retrieved
7 information.

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1 7. A method according to claim 1, in which the network connection is a link
2 with the Internet, the method further comprising:
3 providing the associated identifier in a predetermined format, such format being a
4 selected one of a bar-code format, a product-identifier mark, and a verbal identifier;
5 wherein a portable bar-code scanner is utilized to obtain the associated identifier.

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1 8. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, the method further
2 comprising:
3 contacting a cross-reference hub;
4 searching the cross-reference hub with the associated identifier to obtain at least
5 one additional product identifier; and
6 automatically searching the remote database with the at least one additional
7 product identifier to retrieve replacement related information for the first part.

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1 9. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 8, wherein the associated
2 identifier is a non-unique product category reference, and the at least one additional
3 product identifier is partially unique.

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1 10. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 8, further comprising:
2 semantically analyzing the retrieved replacement related information; and

3 reorganizing the retrieved replacement related information according such
4 analysis.

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1 11. (Unchanged) An article of manufacture, comprising:
2 a computer readable medium;
3 wherein encoded on the computer readable medium are instructions capable of
4 causing a processor to perform the steps of claim 1.

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1 12. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the replacement
2 related information includes related part data identifying the second part.

A 3 Sub
3 DI 13. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:
2 determining a geographic location for the first part;
3 identifying vendors of a replacement part for the first part, each vendor having a
4 geographic location; and
5 sorting the vendors according to their geographic proximity to the first part.

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1 14. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 13, further comprising:
2 providing a proximity preference, such preference set to user election if such
3 election has been made, otherwise to a predetermined value; and
4 culling the retrieved replacement information according to the proximity
5 preference.

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1 15. (Amended) A method according to claim 13, further comprising:
2 receiving user-specified price terms for a replacement part for the first part;

3 identifying, from the retrieved replacement information, a sales price offered by
4 vendors for the replacement part; and
5 culling the retrieved replacement information according to the user-specified
6 price terms.

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1 16. (Unchanged) An article of manufacture, comprising:
2 a computer readable medium;
3 wherein encoded on the computer readable medium are instructions capable of
4 causing a processor to perform the steps of claim 15.

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1 Sub 17. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:
2 DI receiving user-specified price terms for a replacement part for the first part;
3 identifying, from the retrieved replacement information, a sales price offered by
4 vendors for the replacement part; and
5 culling the retrieved replacement information according to the user-specified
6 price terms.

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1 18. (Amended) A method according to claim 1, the method further
2 comprising:
3 retrieving from the remote database replacement related concerns, such
4 concerns including warning and suggestions for a user seeking to replace the first
5 part;
6 retrieving from the remote database identification of related parts requiring
7 replacement along with the first part;
8 displaying the replacement related concerns to the user; and

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9 notifying the user of the related parts requiring replacement.

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1 19. (Unchanged) A method according to claim 18, wherein an expert system
2 interactively displays the replacement related concerns and notification of related
3 parts requiring replacement.

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1 20. (Amended) A system for determining part replacement related
2 information by an end user, comprising:
3 a scanner for scanning an associated identifier of a part;
4 a network-enabled browsing arrangement; and
5 a scanner interface facilitating communication between the scanner interface and
6 the network-enabled browsing arrangement, such communication including
7 transferring the associated identifier to the browsing arrangement;
8 wherein the browser automatically connects to a remote database over a network
9 to retrieve replacement related information for the first part which identifies
10 replacement related information for a second part which should be replaced along
11 with the first part.

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1 21. (Unchanged) A system according to claim 20, further comprising:
2 a computing device comprising a processor capable of being directed to process
3 commands stored in a program memory, and an input/output port;
4 wherein
5 the scanner is in communication with the input/output port,
6 the browsing arrangement is provided as a first sequence of program
7 commands stored in the program memory for execution by the processor, and

8 the scanner interface is provided as a second sequence of program
9 commands stored in the program memory for execution by the processor, where the
10 scanner interface receives the scanned associated identifier through the input/output
11 port and provides such identifier to the browsing arrangement.

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1 22. (Unchanged) A system according to claim 20, wherein the scanner is
2 incorporated into the computing device.

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1 23. (Amended) A system, comprising:
2C³ means for scanning an associated identifier of a first part by the end user;
3 means for automatically coupling by a scanner interface the scanned identifier of
4 the first part to a network enabled browser;
5 means for automatically connecting by the browser over a network connection to
6 a remote database to retrieve replacement related information for the first part which
7 identifies replacement related information for a second part which should be
8 replaced along with the first part, such database searchable by the associated
9 identifier; and
10 means for automatically displaying by the browser for the end user the retrieved
11 replacement related information for the first part.

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1 24. (Unchanged) A system according to claim 23, further comprising:
2 means for obtaining at least one user preference; and
3 means for arranging the retrieved replacement related information according to
4 the at least one user preference.
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1 4 7 25. (New) A method for determining part replacement related, comprising:
Sub 2 obtaining an identifier of a first part with a scanner communicatively coupled to
3 an expert system;
4 automatically connecting by the expert over a network connection to at least one
5 remote database to retrieve, based at least on the identifier, replacement related
6 information for the first part;
7 receiving candidate results from the at least one remote database; and
8 processing by the expert system of the candidate results to identify one or more
9 replacements for the first part.

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1 26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein the replacement related
Sub 2 information for the first part includes replacement related information for a second
3 part suggested to be replaced along with the first part.

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1 27. (New) The method of claim 25, further comprising:
2 displaying in a web browser a web page identifying the one or more
3 replacements for the first part.

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1 28. ^{New} ~~(Unchanged)~~ The method of claim 25, further comprising:
2 obtaining at least one user preference; and
3 culling by the expert system of retrieved replacement related information
4 according to the at least one user preference.

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1 29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the user preference is a selected
2 one of limiting price, limiting distance to travel to obtain a replacement part, limiting